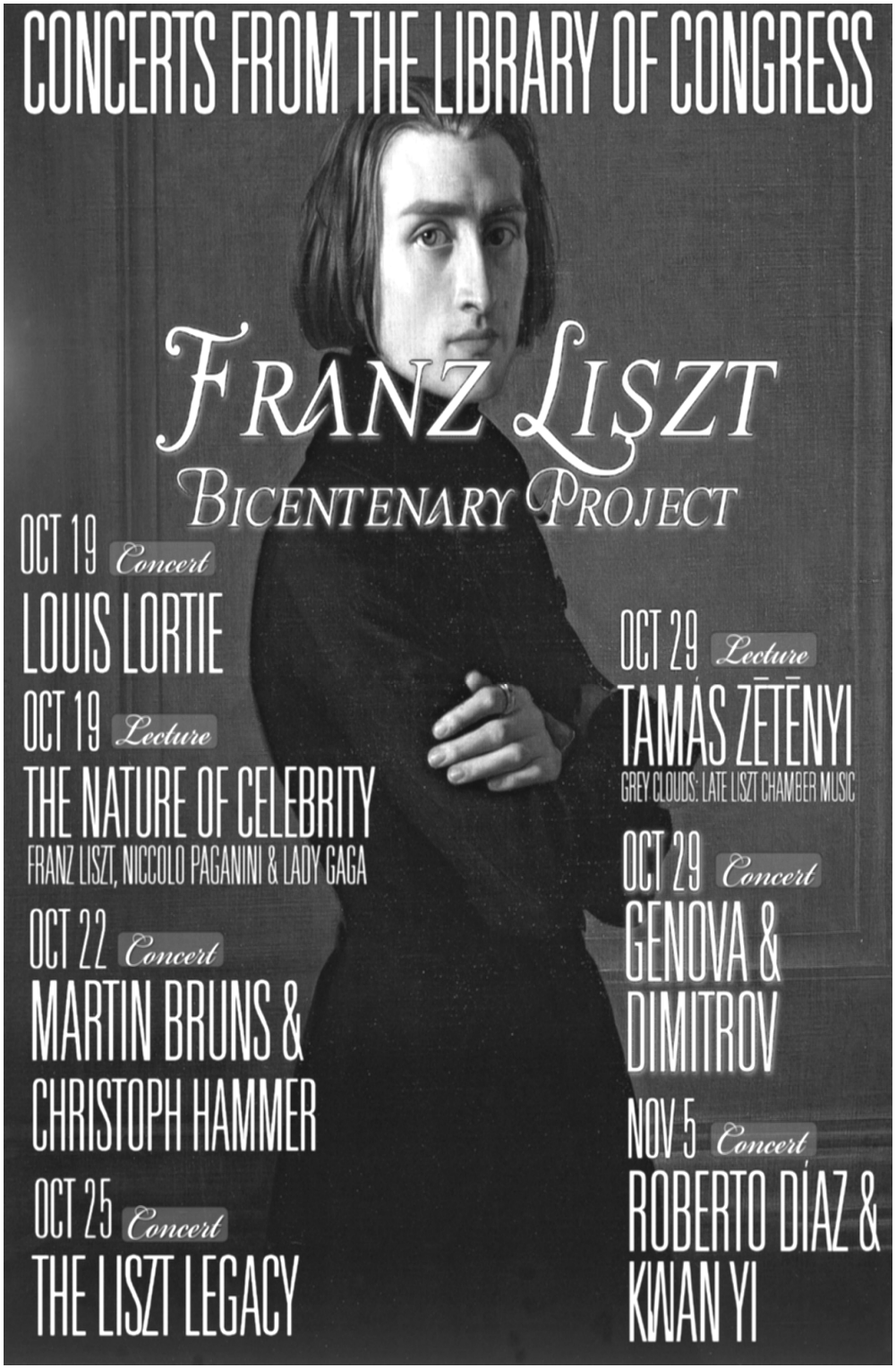

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND
THE AMERICAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY PRESENT:

WHAT THE AUTOGRAPH CAN TELL US:

BEETHOVEN'S SONATA IN E MAJOR, OPUS 109

LECTURE AND RECITAL

WILLIAM MEREDITH, PH.D., LECTURER
MALCOM BILSON, PH.D, LECTURER/PIANO
SHIN HWANG, PIANO

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2011
TWELVE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON

COOLIDGE AUDITORIUM, THOMAS JEFFERSON BUILDING, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

AMS AMERICAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY

concerts from the library of congress

WHAT THE AUTOGRAPH CAN TELL US:
BEETHOVEN'S SONATA IN E MAJOR, OPUS 109

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2011, AT 12:00PM

COOLIDGE AUDITORIUM,

THOMAS JEFFERSON BUILDING, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

One of the treasures of the autograph collection of the Library of Congress is the manuscript of Beethoven's late piano sonata in E Major, Opus 109. Setting aside its status as a treasure, however, the manuscript is worth careful investigation for the record of its compositional history embedded on its pages. More, perhaps, than any other composer, Beethoven is famous for his notoriously illegible manuscripts. As musicians and scholars, we should be grateful for that illegibility, not because it seems to record the heat of composition, but rather because it demonstrates that Beethoven often prematurely began writing out what often became the final score. The number of compositional decisions made when the single-staff sketches of piano music were fleshed out to two staves can be astonishing to observe at times. Indeed, as he once noted, if a manuscript of a work were lost and he had to write it out again, the new version would not be the same as the first version. Deconstructing the work's creation forces us to re-interpret what we argue Beethoven wished to express. The point of such an intellectual and musical venture is not to turn musicology into music pathology, but to see that sketch and autograph studies are most informative for what they tell us about meaning and thus interpretation.

This talk and performance focus on two elements of the creative process visible in this autograph, one abstract, the other practical. The act of 'capturing' a work on paper that had been created both while improvising at the piano and writing sketches sometimes entailed the regularization of any element outside the norm. On occasion, that normalization probably diminished our understanding of what Beethoven wished to express in this complex late-period work. These studies are also eminently practical. While it is true that a carefully proofed first edition must be seen as authoritative in many instances, the autographs often reveal performance details about things Beethoven does not want the pianist to do. For instance, he originally wrote that the pianist should immediately attack the second movement upon the peaceful completion of the first. That 'attaca' mark is vigorously crossed out in the autograph; nothing appears in the first edition to tell the player how to connect the two movements temporally.

- William Meredith, Ph.D.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

WILLIAM MEREDITH, PH.D., LECTURER

Internationally recognized for his position at the forefront of Beethoven research, William Meredith is the founding Director of the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies at San José State University (San José, CA), where he is also a professor in that institution's School of Music and Dance. In addition to furthering research on Beethoven through publications and lectures, Dr. Meredith serves as Executive Director of the American Beethoven Society, as editor for *The Beethoven Journal* (which he established in 1986, the world's only scholarly periodical devoted to Beethoven), and continues to be involved in the development of the online Beethoven Bibliography Database (which he established in 1990), a major resource for musicological research. Dr. Meredith's expertise has earned him a German Academic Exchange Service Grant to research Beethoven's manuscript scores and sketches held at the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, and at the Beethoven archive in Bonn.

MALCOLM BILSON, PH.D., PIANIST/LECTURER

A professor at the Music Department at Cornell University (Ithaca, NY) since 1968, Malcolm Bilson has distinguished himself as one of the pioneers in historic performance practice, specializing in performance on the fortepiano, the eighteenth century forerunner of the modern piano. Dr. Bilson's recordings of piano works of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert, performed on the instruments (restored or replicated) for which these works were conceived, are still considered revelatory for scholars and audiences alike. In addition to extensive performance and recording activities both as soloist and chamber music player, Dr. Bilson devotes himself to the instruction of historic performance practice and fortepiano performance both at Cornell and through master classes in the United States and Europe. His popular educational video, "Knowing the Score" (2005), examines the interpretation of musical notation of eighteenth and nineteenth century masters in order to arrive at an historically-informed interpretation of their works.

SHIN HWANG, PIANIST

Shin Hwang is currently pursuing a dual Master's performance degree in both piano and fortepiano at the University of Michigan, where he studies with Penelope Crawford and Arthur Greene. He made his public debut as a pianist performing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Lafayette College Orchestra. He attended Edward Parmentier's harpsichord workshop, where he discovered his affinity for the harpsichord and early music. Since then he has performed both solo programs on the harpsichord and fortepiano and with the University of Michigan's baroque ensembles. Mr. Hwang was awarded an Early Music America scholarship to study at the Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute and the Westfield Center Summer Academy. Recently, he competed in the Westfield International Fortepiano Competition where he won Third Prize.